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ABSTRACT

Standards of bibliographic organization often are inadequate for those libraries with extensive African American studies collections or those with active user groups. This essay identifies areas where the standards are least effective. The experiences of the staff at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, provide useful insight into various problems associated with the organization of African American studies collections. The Cataloging Unit at the Schomburg Center continues to find it necessary to enhance Library of Congress bibliographic records for African American materials. Too often records are not assigned relevant subject headings to reflect the Black experience. Reasons for a lack of Black-related subject headings being assigned to relevant records vary. Some occurrences could be due to insensitivity on the part of the cataloger or unfamiliarity with Library of Congress policy. Several libraries have expressed support for assigning Black-related subject headings that designate the ethnicity of the subject. Another concern is in the area of cross references and explanatory notes. Within the past two years, the Cataloging Unit has processed numerous works about free Blacks for which the Library of Congress MARC record only has the general subject heading "AFRO-AMERICANS." Subject access to individual works of fiction is another area of concern in regard to adequate access. Examples are provided of Library of Congress MARC (DLC) records without relevant subject headings and corresponding catalog records enhanced with relevant subject headings by the Schomburg Center Cataloging Unit. The paper concludes with suggestions for improvement. (Contains 17 references.) (AEF)

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Are the Standards Adequate for Organizing African American Studies Resources?

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

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Abstract: *Standards of bibliographic organization often are inadequate for those libraries with extensive African American studies collections or those with active user groups. The essay identifies areas where the standards are least effective. The experiences of the author and others at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture provide useful insight into various problems associated with the organization of African American studies collections. Timely suggestions for improvement are offered.*

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The Division of Negro Literature, History, and Prints was established in 1925 as result of the efforts of Miss Ernestine Rose, Branch Librarian at the 135th Street Branch of the New York Public Library. She motivated the Harlem community to collect and preserve materials on Negroana and organized the materials into a community resource.

In his master's thesis entitled "The Schomburg Collection and Its Catalog: An Historical Sketch," Daniel Jack Gore pointed out that, upon acquiring several private donations from persons such as John E. Bruce, Louise Latimer, and Hubert H. Harrison, Miss Rose prophesied that the collection "would eventually become one of the foremost collections of its kind in the country..." He also mentioned that "the prophecy became fact within a single year, when, in 1926 Arthur Schomburg made available for purchase by The New York Public Library his outstanding private collection of Negroana, the rich harvest of twenty-five years of search, on this continent and abroad, for the scanty documentation he needed to refute the melancholy claim he had heard in his youth, that 'the Negro has no history'." (Gore, 1963, 2-3)

According to Mr. Howard Dodson, Chief of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Arthur Alfonso Schomburg's donation of approximately 5,000 books, 3,000 manuscripts, 2,000 etchings and paintings, and several thousand pamphlets laid a "fertile foundation for the propagation of future contributions to Black history". (Dodson, 1988, 74)

In 1972, the name of the Schomburg Collection was changed to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture to reflect its rise in prominence as one of the Research Libraries of the New York Public Library. Today, the collection contains over 5,000,000 items collectively held in five divisions. In 1992 over 75,000 users visited the Center, and an additional 40,000 people requested information by telephone, facsimile, and mail. It has, indeed, become the foremost collection of its kind in the world.

The mission of the Schomburg Center is to collect, organize, make accessible, and interpret materials by and about peoples of African descent. The largest and most comprehensive library in the world which is solely organized for the purpose of documenting the Black experience, the Center

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maintains intellectual control of its collection by ensuring that appropriate Black-related subject headings are assigned to records entered in its catalog. It also attempts to provide bibliographic control of materials written by authors of African ancestry by determining, when possible, the writer's ethnic identity. Catalogers find the peculiarities in the process of providing this level of control challenging and exciting. Quoting from The New York Public Library *Report for 1926*, Gore states:

The most unusual and interesting work of the Circulation Department Cataloging office was the classifying and cataloging of the Schomburg Collection for Negro Literature... (New York Public Library, 1927, 71-2)

He pointed out that:

The Cataloging Office dealt normally with current imprints requiring no elaborate bibliographic searches to establish their identity; whereas the Schomburg Collection consisted mainly of rarities and curiosities which presented formidable problems in both descriptive and subject cataloging. (Gore, 1963, 23-24)

Having been the head cataloger for the Cataloging Unit at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture since December 1990, I, too, have experienced excitement and challenge. Speaking from my practical experience in cataloging African American studies resources, I will now focus on the question posed by the title of this paper, "Are the Standards Adequate for Organizing African-American Resources?" The standards considered here are those set by the Library of Congress.

The problem with access to Black literature resources has been well documented in the literature by Dr. Doris H. Clack, noted authority on cataloging. (Clack, 1975, 1976, 1978, 1979, 1989, and 1994) Her doctoral dissertation, entitled "An Investigation into the Adequacy of Library of Congress Headings," (Clack, 1973, 57) brought about changes in subject access to African American studies resources at the national level. In his widely used text, *Introduction to Cataloging and Classification*, Bohdan S. Wynar wrote, "Doris Clack's 1975 analysis of Black literature resources starts from a critique of LC subject analysis." She reminds us that:

Inadequate subject analysis is not just a problem with Black literature -- though admittedly there the level of adequacy is critically low -- nor has it only in recent years been brought to the attention of the Library world. (Wynar, 1980, 500)

The Library of Congress has taken into consideration some of Clack's recommendations and has made some changes in its policies and procedures for providing access to African American studies resources. It discontinued the use of the subject heading NEGROES and created two new headings, AFRO-AMERICANS for people of African descent in the United States and BLACKS for those outside the United States.

With the advent of computerized catalogs and with the Library of Congress being committed to improving subject access to all library materials, one would think that the problem of access to African American studies resources would no longer exist. The Cataloging Unit at the Schomburg Center continues to find it necessary to enhance Library of Congress bibliographic records for African American materials. Too often the records are not assigned relevant subject headings to reflect the Black experience. When Library of Congress bibliographic records for works about Clarence Thomas, Colin Powell, Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., and others do not include a subject heading that reflects the Black experience in the United States, the Cataloging Unit at the Schomburg Center adds relevant subject headings, such as AFRO-AMERICAN JUDGES, AFRO

-AMERICAN GENERALS. et cetera to the pertinent records. The examples which follow are Library of Congress MARC (DLC) records without relevant subject headings and corresponding catalog records enhanced with relevant subject headings by the Schomburg Center Cataloging Unit for users of the Schomburg Collection. [Shaded subject headings in catalog records are those which were added by the Schomburg Center Cataloging Unit to denote relevance to the African American experience.]

EXAMPLE 1

```
Sc
E
93-654  Wiley, Ralph.
           What Black people should do now :
        dispatches from near the vanguard /
        Ralph Wiley. -- 1st ed. -- New York :
        One World/Ballantine Books, 1993.
           374 p. ; 25 cm.

           Black author

           Includes index.
           ISBN 0-345-38045-2 : $22.00 ($29.00
        Can.)

           1. Afro-Americans--Social
        conditions--1975-     I. Title.
```

EXAMPLE 1a

```
OCLC: 21950714
   2 040     DLC Sc DLC
   3 020     $z 0945167389 : $c $21.95
   4 043     n-us-dc
   5 050  00 F201.3.B37 $b A65 1991
   6 082  00 975.3/04/092 $a B $2 20
   7 090     $b
   8 049     FLUM
   9 100  1  Agronsky, Jonathan I. Z., $d 1946-
  10 245  10 Marion Barry : $b the politics of race / $c Jonathan
I.Z. Agronsky.
  11 260     Latham, NY : $b British American Pub., $c c1991.
  12 300     xii, 380 p. ; $c 25 cm.
  13 600  10 Barry, Marion, $d 1936-
  14 651   0 Washington (D.C.) $x Politics and government
$y 1967-
  15 650   0 Mayors $z Washington (D.C.) $x Biography.
```

EXAMPLE 1b

```
        Agronsky, Jonathan I. Z., 1946-
           Marion Barry : the Politics of race /
        Jonathan I.Z. Agronsky. -- Latham, NY :
        British American Pub., c1991.
           . . .
           1. Barry, Marion, 1936-  2.  Washington
        (D.C.)--Politics and government--1967-  3.
        Mayors--Washington (D.C.)--Biography.  4.
        Afro-American mayors--Washington (D.C.)--
        Biography.  I. Title
```

EXAMPLE 2a

```
OCLC: 26398957
   2 040     DLC $c DLC
   3 020     0299133907
   4 020     029913394X (pbk.)
   5 043     n-us---
   6 050  00 ML420.A6 $b A3 1992
   7 082  00 782.1/092 $a B $2 20
   8 090     $b
   9 049     FLUM
  10 100  1  Anderson, Marian, $d 1897-1993.
  11 245  10 My Lord, what a morning : $b an autobiography / $c by Marian
Anderson ; with an introduction by Nellie Y. McKay.
  12 260     Madison : $b University of Wisconsin Press, $c c1992.
  13 300     xxxiii, 314 p. : $b ill. ; $c 23 cm.
  14 440   0 Wisconsin studies in American autobiography
  15 500     Originally published: New York :Viking Press, 1956.
  16 504     Includes bibliographical references (p.xxxi-xxxiii).
  17 600  10 Anderson, Marian, $d 1897-1993.
  18 650   0 Contraltos $z United States $x Biography.
```

EXAMPLE 2b

```
        Anderson, Marian, 1897-1993.
           My Lord, what a morning : an autobiography
        / by Marian Anderson ; with an introduction
        by Nellie Y. McKay. -- Madison : University
        of Wisconsin Press, c1992.
           . . .
           1. Anderson, Marian, 1897-1993. 2.
        Contraltos--United States--Biography. 3.
        Afro-American singers--Biography.  I. Title.
        II. Series.
```

EXAMPLE 3a

```
OCLC: 24541819
   2 040     DLC $c DLC
   3 020     0800625439 (alk. paper) : $c $16.95
   4 050  00 E185.97.K5 $b B353 1992
   5 082  00 323/.092 $2 20
   6 090     $b
   7 049     FLUM
   8 100  1  Baldwin, Lewis V., $d 1949-
   9 245  10 To make the wounded whole : $b the cultural legacy of Martin Luther
King, Jr. / $c Lewis V. Baldwin.
  10 260     Minneapolis : $b Fortress Press, $c c1992.
  11 300     xix, 324 p. ; $c 22 cm.
  12 504     Includes bibliographical references and index.
  13 600  10 King, Martin Luther, $c Jr., $d 1929-1968.
  14 600  10 King, Martin Luther, $c Jr., $d 1929-1968
$x Philosophy.
  15 650   0 Black theology.
```

EXAMPLE 3b

Baldwin, Lewis V., 1949-
To make the wounded whole : the cultural legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. / Lewis V. Baldwin. -- Minneapolis : Fortress Press, c1992.
. . .
1. King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968. 2. King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968--Philosophy. 3. Black theology. 4. Afro-American theologians. 5. Afro-Americans--Race identity. I. Title.

EXAMPLE 4a

```
OCLC: 27641249
   2 040     DLC $c DLC $d UKM
   3 015     GB93-52164
   4 019     29471829
   5 020     0029046556 : $c $24.95
   6 043     n-us--
   7 050  00 KF8745.T48 $b B76 1993
   8 082  00 347.73/2634 $a 347.3073534 $2 20
   9 090     $b
  10 049     FLUM
  11 100  1  Brock, David, $d 1962-
  12 245  14 The real Anita Hill : $b the untold story / $c by David Brock.
  13 260     New York : $b Free Press ; $a Toronto : $b Maxwell Macmillan Canada
; $a New York : $b Maxwell Macmillan International, $c c1993.
  14 300     ix, 438 p. ; $c 25 cm.
  15 504     Includes bibliographical references (p. 389-424) and index.
  16 600  10 Thomas, Clarence, $d 1948
  17 600  10 Hill, Anita.
  18 650   0 Judges $x Selection and appointment $z United States.
  19 650   0 Sexual harassment of women $z United States.
  20 600  14 Thomas, Clarence, $d 1948
  21 600  14 Hill, Anita.
  22 610  14 United States. $b Supreme Court.
  23 653  0  Judges
  24 653  0  United States
```

EXAMPLE 4b

Brock, David, 1962-
The real Anita Hill : the untold story / by David Brock. -- New York : Free Press ; Toronto : Maxwell Macmillan Canada ; New York : Maxwell Macmillan International, c1993.
. . .
1. Thomas, Clarence, 1948- 2. Hill, Anita. 3. Judges--United States--Selection and appointment. 4. Sexual harassment of women--United States. 5. Afro-American judges--Selection and appointment. 6. Afro-American women. I. Title.

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EXAMPLE 5a

```
OCLC: 21600852
   2 040     DLC $c DLC $d UKM
   3 015     GB91-32512
   4 020     0874747422 (alk. paper)
   5 043     n-us---
   6 050  00 UG626.2.D37 $b A3 1991
   7 082  00 358.4/0092 $a B $2 20
   8 090     $b
   9 049     FLUM
  10 100  1  Davis, Benjamin O. $q (Benjamin Oliver), $d 1912-
  11 245  10 Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., American : $b an autobiography.
  12 260     Washington : $b Smithsonian Institution Press, $c c1991.
  13 300     x, 442 p., [24] p. of plates : $b ill. ; $c 24 cm.
  14 500     Includes index.
  15 600  10 Davis, Benjamin O. $q (Benjamin Oliver), $d 1912-
  16 650   0 Generals $z United States $x Biography.
  17 610  10 United States. $b Air Force $x Biography.
  18 600  14 Davis, Benjamin O. $q (Benjamin Oliver), $d 1912-
  19 610  14 United States. $b Air Force.
  20 653     Air forces
  21 653     United States
```

EXAMPLE 5b

Davis, Benjamin O. (Benjamin Oliver), 1912-
Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., American : an autobiography. -- Washington : Smithsonian Institution Press, c1991.

. . .

1. Davis, Benjamin O. (Benjamin Oliver), 1912- 2. Generals--United States--Biography. 3. United States. Air Force--Biography. 4. Afro-American generals--biography. I. Title.

EXAMPLE 6a

```
OCLC: 27811673
   1 010     93-19021
   2 040     DLC $c DLC
   3 020     0684195135 : $c $24.00 ($29.95 Can.)
   4 043     n-us---
   5 050  00 PN2287.J589 $b A3 1993
   6 082  00 792/.028/092 $a B $2 20
   7 090     $b
   8 049     FLUM
   9 100  1  Jones, James Earl.
  10 245  10 James Earl Jones : $b voices and silences / $c James Earl Jones
and Penelope Niven.
  11 260     New York : $b Scribner ; $a Toronto : $b Maxwell Macmillan
Canada ; $a New York : $b Maxwell Macmillan International, $c c1993.
  12 300     xxii, 393 p. : $b ill. ; $c 25 cm.
  13 500     Includes index.
  14 600  10 Jones, James Earl.
  15 650   0 Actors $z United States $x Biography.
  16 700  10 Niven, Penelope.
```


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EXAMPLE 6b

Jones, James Earl.
James Earl Jones : voices and silences / James Earl Jones and Penelope Niven. -- New York : Scribner ; Toronto : Maxwell Macmillan Canada ; New York : Maxwell Macmillan International, c1993.
. . .
1. Jones, James Earl. 2. Actors--United States --Biography. 3. **Afro-American actors--Biography.** I. Niven, Penelope. II. Title. III. Title: Voices and silences.

EXAMPLE 7a

```
OCLC: 21194870
   2 040     DLC $c DLC
   3 020     0809243407 : $c $19.95
   4 043     n-us---
   5 050  00 ML429.S6 $b A3 1990
   6 082  00 782.42166/092 $a B $2 20
   7 090     $b
   8 049     FLUM
   9 100  1  Singleton, Raynoma Gordy, $d 1937-
  10 245  10 Berry, me, and Motown: $b the untold story / $c
Raynoma Gordon Singleton with Bryan Brown and Mim Eichler.
  11 260     Chicago : $b Contemporary Books, $c c1990.
  12 300     vii, 344 p. : $b ill. ; $c 24 cm.
  13 500     Includes index.
  14 600  10 Singleton, Raynoma Gordy, $d 1937-
  15 650   0 Sound recording executives and producers $z United
States $x Biography.
  16 600  10 Gordy, Berry.
  17 610  20 Motown Record Corporation.
  18 700  10 Brown, Bryan, $d 1955-
  19 700  10 Eichler. Mim.
```

EXAMPLE 7b

Singleton, Raynoma Gordy, 1937-
Berry, me and Motown : the untold story / Raynoma Gordon Singleton with Bryan Brown and Mim Eichler. -- Chicago : Contemporary Books, c1990.
. . .
1. Singleton, Raynoma Gordy, 1937- 2. Sound recording executives and producers--United States --Biography. 3. Gordy, Berry. 4. Motown Record Corporation. 5. **Afro-American women executives--Biography.** 6. **Afro-American executives--Biography.** I. Brown, Bryan. II. Eichler, Mim. III. Title.

The reasons for a lack of Black-related subject headings being assigned to relevant records vary. Such occurrences could be due to insensitivity on the part of the cataloger. It could be unfamiliarity with Library of Congress policy. *The Subject Cataloging Manual: Subject Headings* gives the following instructions:

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"Assign headings that specify the sex and/or ethnic group of the class of persons, such as WOMEN ARCHITECTS, AFRO-AMERICAN LAWYERS, ETC., if that is a significant aspect of the work. When assigning this heading assign it in addition to the unqualified heading for the class persons. Examples:

Title: "Just make them beautiful": the many worlds of a designing woman / by Helen Rose.

1. Rose, Helen.
2. Costume designers--California--Los Angeles--Biography.
3. Women costume designers--California--Los Angeles--Biography.

Title: Black in Selma: the uncommon life of J.L. Chestnut.

1. Chestnut, J. L.
2. Lawyers--Alabama--Biography.
3. Afro-American lawyers--Alabama--Biography. (Library of Congress, 1991, 3)

One could interpret these instructions to mean that a Black-related subject heading should not be assigned, if a work does not address the subject's unique experience as an African American. The mere fact that the person is an African-American, a member of a group of people who have been universally, consistently, and deliberately excluded from full participation in American society, guarantees a unique experience, the Black experience. From an African American perspective, libraries should facilitate the retrieval of materials which document the accomplishments of African Americans, individually or collectively, even when the work does not explicitly discuss race related issues. Assigning Black-related subject headings that designate the ethnicity of the subject would facilitate the retrieval of such materials.

Several libraries have expressed support for the idea. Librarians at the Vivian G. Harsh Collection of Afro-American History and Literature of the Chicago Public Library explained that users often do not know a specific name, but will approach the catalog knowing the profession. By assigning a topical subject heading that identifies both the profession and the ethnicity, such as AFRO-AMERICAN LAWYERS, all individuals within the class and the ethnic group are collocated together in the catalog, where a specific name of an individual may, then, be ascertained. The practice assists in user recall. (English, 1994)

Another concern is in the area of cross references and explanatory notes. When using Library of Congress subject headings with African American studies resources, too often there is a need for relevant cross references and explanatory notes. Within the past two years, the Cataloging Unit has processed numerous works about free Blacks for which the Library of Congress MARC record only has the general subject heading AFRO-AMERICANS. Some of the Library

of Congress MARC records also had the chronological subdivision "--To 1863".

EXAMPLE 8a

```
OCLC: 25873329
   2 040     DLC $c DLC $d UKM
   3 015     GB93-49843
   4 019     29389234
   5 020     1560982039 (alk. paper)
   6 020     1560982861 (pbk)
   7 043     n-us---
   8 050  00 E185.9 $b .H67 1993
   9 082  00 973/.0496073 $2 20
  10 090     $b
  11 049     FLUM
  12 100  1  Horton, James Oliver.
  13 245  10 Free people of color : $b inside the African American community
/ $c James Oliver Horton.
  14 260     Washington : $b Smithsonian Institution Press, $c c1993.
  15 300     ix, 238 p. ; $c 24 cm.
  16 504     Includes bibliographical references (p. 201-227) and index.
  17 650   0 Afro-Americans $x History $y To 1863.
  18 651   0 United States $x Race relations.
  19 653  0  Free blacks.
  20 651   4 United States $x Race relations.
```

EXAMPLE 8b

```
OCLC: 28711045
   2 040     DLC $c DLC
   3 020     0813118581 (alk. paper) : $c $22.00
   4 043     n-us---
   5 050  00 E185.18 $b .W55 1994
   6 082  00 973/.0496073 $2 20
   7 090     $b
   8 049     FLUM
   9 100  1  Wilson, Carol, $d 1962-
  10 245  10 Freedom at risk : $b the kidnapping of free Blacks in
America, 1780-1865 / $c Carol Wilson.
  11 260     Lexington, Ky. : $b University Press of Kentucky, $c c1994.
  12 300     177 p. ; $c 23 cm.
  13 504     Includes bibliographical references (p. [146]-165) and index.
  14 650   0 Afro-Americans $x History $y To 1863.
  15 650   0 Kidnapping $z United States $x History $y 18th century.
  16 650   0 Kidnapping $z United States $x History $y 19th century.
  17 650   0 Afro-Americans $x Legal status, laws, etc.
  18 650   0 Slavery $z United States.
```

Several of the Library of Congress MARC records included the uncontrolled terms "Free blacks" or "Free Negroes" in the 653 field.

EXAMPLE 9

```
OCLC: 27143763
   2 040     DLC $c DLC
   3 020     0679745815 : $c $12.00
   4 043     n-us-va
   5 050  10 E185.96 $b .M18 1993
   6 082  00 929/.2/0973 $2 20
   7 090     $b
   8 049     FLUM
   9 100  1  Madden, T. O.
  10 245  10 We were always free : $b the Maddens of Culpeper County,
Virginia : a 200-year family history / $c T.O. Madden, Jr. with Ann L.
Miller ; foreword by Nell Irvin Painter.
  11 250     1st Vintage Books ed.
  12 260     New York : $b Vintage Books, $c 1993.
  13 300     xxx, 218 p. : $b ill. ; $c 21 cm.
  14 500     originally published: New York : Norton, c1992.
  15 504     Includes bibliographical references and index.
  16 600  30 Madden family.
  17 650   0 Afro-Americans $z Virginia $z Culpeper County $x Biography.
  18 651   0 Culpeper County (Va.) $x Biography.
  19 653   0 Free Negroes; $a Free blacks
  20 700  10 Miller, Ann L., $d 1954-
```

Some other Library of Congress MARC records included "Free Blacks" or "Free Negroes" was in the title, the 245 field.

EXAMPLE 10a

```
OCLC: 26889665
   2 040     DLC $c DLC
   3 020     1556136587
   4 043     n-us-va
   5 050  00 F232.R7 $b B69 1992
   6 082  00 929/.3/089960730755922 $2 20
   7 090     $b
   8 049     FLUM
   9 100  2  Boyd-Rush, Dorothy A.
  10 245  10 Register of free Blacks, Rockingham County, Virginia,
1807-1859 / $c Dorothy A. Boyd-Rush.
  11 260     Bowie, Md. : $b Heritage Books, $c c1992.
  12 300     xiii, 252 p. ; $c 22 cm.
  13 500     Includes index.
  14 650   0 Afro-Americans $z Virginia $z Rockingham County $x Genealogy.
  15 651   0 Rockingham County (Va.) $x Genealogy.
  16 650   0 Registers of births, etc. $z Virginia $z Rockingham County.
```

EXAMPLE 10b

```
OCLC: 24340628
   2 040     DLC $c DLC
   3 019     25823658
   4 043     n-us-md
   5 050  00 F187.H2 $b M49 1991
   6 082  00 929/.3/089960730752 $2 20
   7 090     $b
   8 049     FLUM
   9 100   1 Meyer, Mary Keysor.
  10 245  10 Free Blacks in Harford, Somerset, and Talbot counties,
Maryland, 1832 / $c Mary K. Meyer, compiler.
  11 260     Mt. Airy, Md. (5179 Perry Rd., Mt. Airy 21771) : $b
Pipe Creek Publications, $c 1991.
  12 300     vii, 97 p. ; $c 28 cm.
  13 504     Includes bibliographical references and index.
  14 650   0 Afro-Americans $z Maryland $z Harford County $x Genealogy.
  15 650   0 Afro-Americans $z Maryland $z Somerset County $x Genealogy.
  16 650   0 Afro-Americans $z Maryland $z Talbot County $x Genealogy.
  17 651   0 Harford County (Md.) $x Genealogy.
  18 651   0 Somerset County (Md.) $x Genealogy.
  19 651   0 Talbot County (Md.) $x Genealogy.
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Although the practice of adding uncontrolled vocabulary facilitates the retrieval of pertinent documents when searching by keywords, a legal, controlled subject heading is needed to collocate all materials on the subject. The problem could be resolved by allowing an ethnic qualifier, such as AFRO-AMERICAN, to be added to the already established heading FREEMEN. The structure would provide relevancy and permit specificity in the assigning of the subject heading. Until a qualifier is authorized to be used with the subject heading FREEMEN, an alternative solution to the problem would be to add an explanatory note or cross reference to inform the user of the best approach to search the subject. Under current policy, the most efficient search is by keyword, provided there is a 653 field in the MARC record.

Subject access to individual works of fiction is another area of concern in regard to adequate access to African American studies resources. The Cataloging Unit at the Schomburg Center had been providing subject access to individual works of fiction long before the general library community began calling for subject cataloging for those works. Unfortunately, the practice was practically abandoned, or seldom applied, after the Schomburg Center became a part of the Research Libraries of the New York Public Library. Fortunately, it has now been resumed and catalogers are encouraged to add as many subjects as are deemed necessary to bring out the topical treatment or geographical setting of the work. Catalogers are also encouraged to add form headings with ethnic qualifiers to individual works of literature by authors of Third World countries, and they have been most consistent with this practice for African literature. For example:

Author: Osundare, Niyi, 1947-
Title: Waiting laughters: (a long song in many voices)

1. Nigerian poetry (English)

Author: Essien, Stephen Akpan
Title: Parry

1. Nigeria--Fiction. 2. Nigerian fiction (English)

Other libraries with extensive African American collections also find the Library of Congress subject headings limiting in the treatment of literary works. The Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University also has adopted a policy which allows it to assign subject headings to individual works of fiction. (Flower, 1994)

In her dissertation, Clack mentioned that the 484 additional relevant entries entered on the Schomburg records for "which the Library of Congress provides no subject headings consist of separate literary works such as fiction, drama, essays, lectures and criticisms of the same." (Clack, 1973, 57) She further pointed out that "fiction is important source material for descriptions relative to the Black experience and often may be the only source of such information." (Clack, 1973, 57)

The *Guidelines on Subject Access for Individual Works of Fiction, Drama, etc.,* (American Library Association, 1990) published in 1990 by the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS), offers excellent instructions for assigning subject headings to individual works of literature; however, they do not go far enough. Ethnic qualifiers for form/genre headings are not included, and the Library of Congress assigns subject headings for collections of literary works, but not for individual works.

I propose that the *Guidelines...* include a policy that would permit the union of ethnic and national qualifiers to form form/genre headings, for example, AMERICAN LITERATURE--AFRO-AMERICAN AUTHORS. Such form/ethnic headings would provide improved subject access to African American studies resources and improve bibliographic control for authors, particularly African American authors, for which there are limited reference sources available. Although published reference sources are increasing for African-American writers, there are still numerous little known writers for whom such practice would improve bibliographic control.

Catalogers are concerned about aspects of organizing African American studies resources other than subject heading. Not only do users researching in the area of African American studies want to know when a work is about an African American, but they also want to know when the work is by an African American author. An early Schomburg cataloging practice, instituted under the administration of Ms. Jean Blackwell Hutson, former Curator of the Schomburg Center, provides for a "Black author" local note in the bibliographic record.

The note has been invaluable in identifying authors of African descent when relevant subject headings are not assigned. It has proven useful in the recent efforts of the New York Public Library Research Libraries to improve subject access to African American studies resources in its general collection. (Kenselaar, 1992, 3)

Other libraries with extensive African American studies resources have policies that require them to identify authors of African descent. The Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University adds a similar note to its bibliographic records, and maintains a nationality authority file. (Flower, 1994) Unfortunately, Schomburg discontinued adding nationality to its local note during the early 1970s. Nationality was applied most consistently to American authors, i.e. "American Negro author". Other libraries depend on the printed catalogs produced by the Schomburg to assist them in providing their users with such information. (Shockley, 1994) Some librarians have questioned the practice of identifying ethnicity and nationality of authors in the public catalog. I happen to be a firm supporter of the practice and would like to see nationality reinstated in Schomburg's local note and become a national policy, especially for libraries serving special populations. Terms of ethnicity and

nationality could be used for machine manipulation in an electronic environment to create bibliographies, directories, and other useful files of African American authors. Such files would be invaluable tools for organizing African American studies collections and outstanding community resources. I hope that the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center will decide to publish its nationality authority file and make it more widely available. Its publication would be a significant contribution to the fields of library science and African American studies, as well as an invaluable cataloging tool for organizing African American collections.

Libraries with extensive African American studies resources are constantly exploring ways to improve the organization of their collections. The Moorland-Spingarn Research Center and the Schomburg Center enhance the bibliographic records for edited works, conference proceedings, etc. At the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, name-title added entries provide additional access points to selected bibliographic records. The Schomburg Center adds contents notes. The current practice is to add fuli contents notes if the item contains eighteen or fewer titles. Partial contents notes, which consist of author names only, are made if there are more than eighteen titles in the item. Catalogers are encourage to use judgement in deciding when a note would result in a record that is too long to be useful.

My work with the Schomburg Center has been intellectually enhancing and culturally enlightening. The reputation of the Center as the preeminent collection, which documents the history and culture of peoples of African descent, is world-wide. Cataloging African American collections, indeed, provides excitement for catalogers who wish to meet Dr. Clack's challenge of assuring effective and efficient retrieval of this rich body of literature. Thank you, Dr. Clack, my former professor and "telephone reviser", for giving so much of yourself as you nurtured me into a seasoned cataloger and, thus, prepared me to meet the challenge of your high standards.

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Dorothy Ann Washington 9/27/95

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